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ABSTRACT

The ethnic arts major at the University of California, Los Angeles--an interdisciplinary undergraduate program of courses in anthropology, art, dance, folklore and mythology, music, and theater arts--is described. The program objectives are to facilitate cultural and cross-cultural investigation of human artistic expression, and to provide an intellectual foundation for an integrative approach to the study of the arts. The program entails a core curriculum, a concentration in one area, the senior colloquium, and interdepartmental electives. Students also have to fulfill individual college requirements, including a foreign language. Students become acquainted with the techniques of investigation employed in the social sciences and the arts; they are exposed to the literature, problems, and perspectives of art forms around the world, and become familiar with various media of artistic expression. The core curriculum is composed of six introductory courses, each representing a different discipline. The core also establishes the interrelationships among these disciplines, and the courses range from an introduction to cultural anthropology to theater of the non-European world. Additionally, each of six possible areas of concentration has its own requirements, and students also choose 12 units of upper division ethnic arts electives in a field outside their specialties. Senior projects and internships along with the senior colloquium are components of the major. (SW)

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ETHNIC ARTS PROGRAM AT UCLA

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The Ethnic Arts major at UCLA is an interdisciplinary undergraduate program of courses in Anthropology, Art, Dance, Folklore & Mythology, Music and Theater Arts. Conceived as a continuing dialogue between the Social Sciences and the Arts, the mission of the Ethnic Arts Program is twofold:

(i) to facilitate cultural and cross-cultural investigation of human artistic expression, and

(ii) to provide an intellectual foundation for an integrative approach to the study of the arts.

Coordinated by Professor Allegra Fuller Snyder and offered by both the College of Fine Arts and the College of Letters & Sciences, the Ethnic Arts Program was initiated in 1972 during a period of budget stringency. One of the stipulations of the original mandate was that the Program would function without necessitating any separate funding, and basically it has existed at that level for the past nine years. Because of that, perhaps, the Program is all the more impressive in that it is one of the few which have managed to succeed in attracting faculty and students from six departments and two colleges.

The only one of its kind anywhere, the Ethnic Arts major offers a multi-cultural learning experience that demands imagination, initiative, enthusiasm and exploration. (Other colleges and universities have Ethnic Studies majors, but not Ethnic Arts.) The Ethnic Arts Program is the largest of the undergraduate interdisciplinary specializations on campus, and has a greater than average percentage of those receiving degrees than

other departments in the College of Fine Arts. However, Ethnic Arts is not for everyone, and does not try to be. The screening process is selective, and the curriculum, demanding.

The Ethnic Ars Program entails a core curriculum, a concentration in one area, the senior colloquium, and interdepartmental electives. Students also have to fulfill individual college requirements including a foreign language requirement. In a program of coordinated studies in several disciplines the students become acquainted with the techniques of investigation employed by scholars in the social sciences and the arts. In addition to the exposure to the literature, problems and perspectives of art forms around the world, they become familiar with various media of artistic expression.

The core curriculum is composed of six introductory courses, each representing a different discipline. The core also establishes the interrelationships amongst these disciplines in addition to introducing the six areas, and the courses range from Introduction to Cultural Anthropology to Theater of the Non-European World, to African, Oceanic and Native American Art.

There are six possible areas of concentration, with each one establishing its own requirements. For example, within the Art concentration, students first select one of a group of courses focusing on different periods in art history. Next, they choose eight of twenty-two possible courses on art from various periods and cultures of the world,

including the Art and Archeology of Egypt, Pre-Columbian Art of Mexico, Central America and the Andes, and African Art of the Sub-Saharan region, West Sudan and the Guinea Coast. Requirements for Music, however, are not as flexible. Students must take three separate series of courses, each sequential in nature. The first deals with music theory, counterpoint, harmony and orchestration; the second focuses on history and literature, and the third, on music and dance of different cultures.

In addition to the core and concentration, students choose twelve units of upper division Ethnic Arts electives in a field outside their specialties. Working closely with advisors to plan their curricula, they choose such courses as Ethnography on Film, Analysis of Human Movement, Baltic and Slavic Folklore and Mythology, or the Music of China. Both these and the language courses help students broaden their understanding of human expressions in a cross-cultural context.

The Senior Colloquium is a two quarter interdisciplinary course in which students and faculty members meet twice a week to discuss topics relevant to the study of Ethnic Arts. These discussions, dealing with the meaning of "ethnic" or the function of the arts within different cultures, help students integrate the work that they have done in previous courses. The first quarter is devoted to discussions and short essays on topics discussed. These exercises help develop a clear understanding of the philosophy of the Program and also assist the student in completing a senior project which is required in the second quarter.

Senior projects, combined with personal ideas and interests, have often helped students in identifying goals and develop plans for further academic or professional endeavors. Students participating in the Program gain valuable tools which can, and have, been utilized in areas such as multi-cultural education, community arts management, museum work and research fields. This is evident from the "Job Opportunities and Career Goals for Ethnic Arts Graduates" study conducted in June 1981. According to the study, thirty-six of the respondents (40% of those surveyed) shared a total of fifty-two careers and jobs between them, inferring to the ability to apply and adapt their major to a variety of occupations. Furthermore, over 50% of the respondents reported that they had created positions that hereto were nonexistent in the job market.

Another important aspect of the Ethnic Arts learning experience is the internship program. Internships provide the opportunity to experience cultural and cross-cultural study in various concentration areas in a professional setting, and thus, are encouraged as part of the students' work. At present, there are several programs with different community based arts institutions including the Craft and Folk Art Museum. While the Ethnic Arts major is not viewed necessarily as a foundation for graduate study, it may become so with proper course selection, and many graduates have proceeded in fields as diverse as Dance, Law and Management.

The Ethnic Arts Program is able to accommodate up to forty students, with ten to each class. At present, there are thirty-three students enrolled, with more than half that number comprised of transfers from

other majors. Historically, a greater number of students graduate from the College of Letters & Sciences. While the ideal student — the entering freshman who has declared his or her major — takes four full years to graduate, most students complete the requirements for the major in two years.

The major may be defined by its philosophy and objectives, but it is maintained and reinforced by the faculty, drawn from the six departments. Not only do the members serve on a voluntary basis, but they also actively and enthusiastically participate in student counseling and in program development and instructional improvement. While the objective of the Program is not to have a hard and fast group of faculty members, it is most important that representation from the six disciplines continue.

In an era of diminishing returns, with tuition costs continually escalating, student loans harder to come by, and the job market, increasingly more competitive, the trend is towards more definite career-oriented disciplines rather than a broad liberal arts education. Yet, despite the shrinking humanities population in general, the Ethnic Arts Program at UCLA has continued to survive and experience a growth rate of nearly 10% per annum. While it is not readily possible to attach specific career goals to an Ethnic Arts degree, perhaps of continuing significance, is the strength of a truly liberal arts program which assists students to go beyond the limit of a single career objective.

Hopefully, the Ethnic Arts Program at UCLA, together with other innovative programs such as the Ph.D./M.B.A. program in Humanities and Management recently initiated at the Claremont Graduate School (The Los Angeles Executive, December 1981) will prove contrary to the Rockefeller Foundation Study, "The Humanities in American Life," (Newsweek, October 13, 1980) that some students and educators do "recognize the humanities as part of basic education, linking literacy to cognitive aesthetics and critical skills."